

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



*XIV International Scientific Agriculture Symposium
"Agrosym 2023"
Jahorina, October 05-08, 2023*



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TRADITIONAL AGROBIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES BY CEREAL AND COWPEA CUSTODIAN FARMERS IN MOSSI AREA OF BURKINA FASO

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Abstract

Traditional agrobiodiversity management practices, including local landrace selection, seed conservation, on-field crop associations, and crop rotation, play a critical role in conserving local crops genetic resources, ensuring food and nutritional security, and safeguarding farmers' cultural heritage. Through segregated focus group discussions and individual semi-structured interviews, this study investigates the characteristics, practices, and conservation methods employed by custodian farmers of sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*), pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*), and cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) in 11 villages within the Mossi area of Burkina Faso. Variations in the number of custodian farmers are observed across villages, with the majority falling within the 30-60 age range. Despite their predominantly illiterate status, custodian farmers possess diverse landraces of the three crops, including 11 traditional sorghum, 9 cowpea, and 2 millet landraces. Characterization of the traditional landraces encompasses seed and/or spike morphology, usages, and color. Custodian farmers employ traditional conservation techniques such as granaries and clay pots for cereals, as well as triple-layered containers and sacks for cowpea. The exchange of seeds among custodian farmers serves a pivotal function in the preservation of diversity within traditional landraces. These individuals, who assume a crucial role in conserving traditional sorghum, millet, and cowpea landraces, possess valuable knowledge regarding the management of crops that exhibit resilience to climate variability and hold significant cultural importance. The effective preservation of landraces through skilled farmer management embodies a critical step towards ensuring food security and promoting indigenous agricultural practices within an agroecological framework. Acknowledging and supporting the expertise of custodian farmers represents a means of heightening agrobiodiversity conservation efforts while concurrently strengthening sustainable farming systems.

Keywords: *agrobiodiversity management, custodian farmers, seed conservation, cereal crops, Burkina Faso*